Getting started with content ops

Rachel McConnell

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What is content ops?

Operations is a core part of content leadership and key to delivering product content strategy.

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It’s making sure you have the right people, process, tools and systems in place to work effectively and efficiently, and helps your team scale with impact.

People	Capability	Process	Tools and systems	Alignment
• Recruitment • Onboarding • Building collaboration • Measuring engagement or team satisfaction	• Assessing skills • Capacity planning • Identifying skill gaps • Organising or running training and coaching • Facilitating crits or workshops	• Improving process, workflows and ways of working • Creating frameworks and guidance • Defining standards and governance • Creating templates for testing and demonstrating success	• Assessing tools and systems for suitability • Procuring new tools • Creating simple team tools and templates • Defining or building design system elements	• Managing budgets • Encouraging cross-functional work • Identifying efficiency savings • Advocacy of content • Demonstrating impact of content to wider organisation

Operational activities are all the activities we do around actually doing the work that enable us to get the work done.

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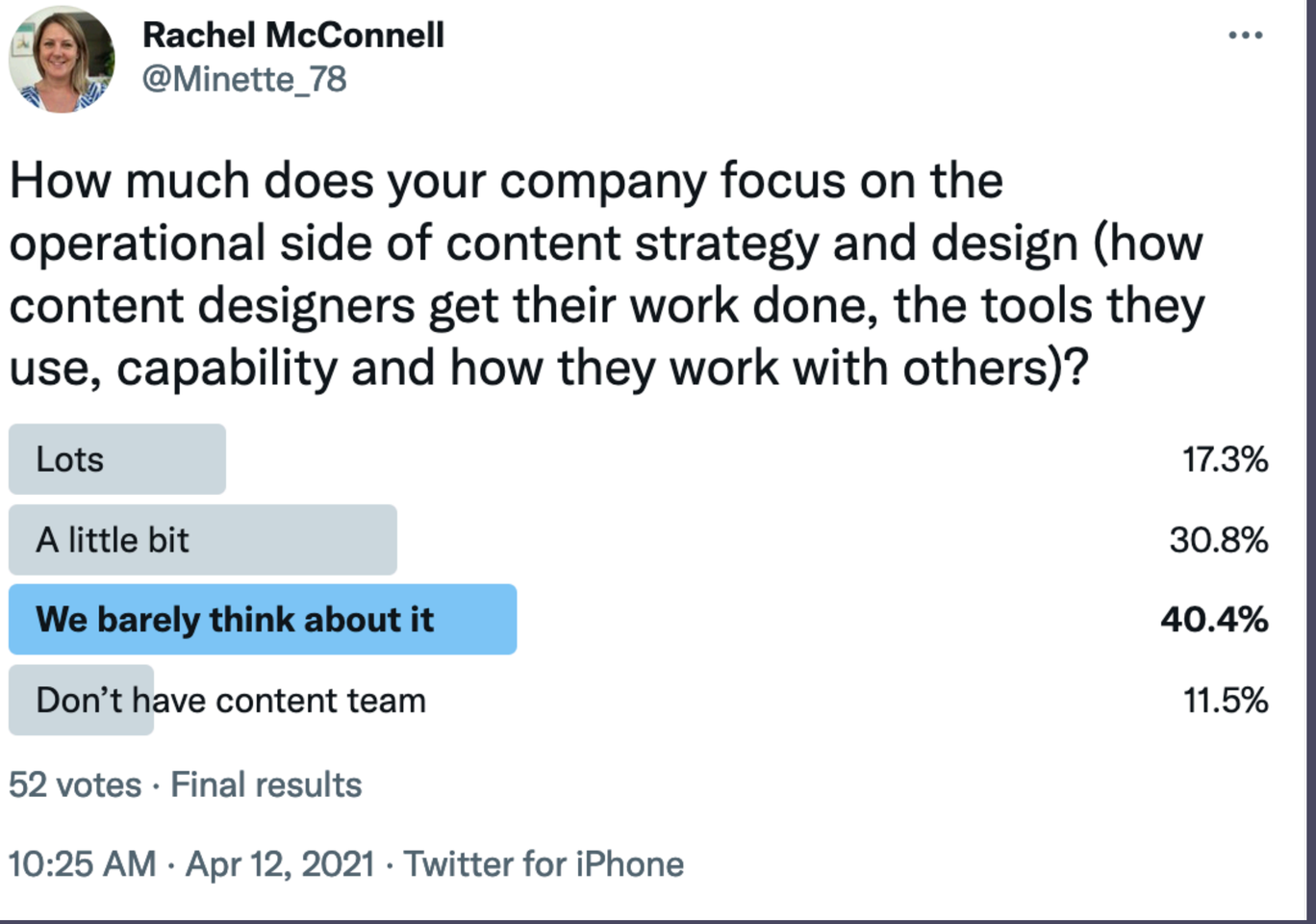
Rachel McConnell
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How much does your company focus on the operational side of content strategy and design (how content designers get their work done, the tools they use, capability and how they work with others)?
Lots
17.3%
A little bit
30.8%
We barely think about it
40.4%
Don't have content team
11.5%
52 votes · Final results
10:25 AM · Apr 12, 2021 · Twitter for iPhone

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Operations isn’t:

- Defining guidance, such as voice and tone
- Defining strategic direction
- Managing content
- Managing people

How do content ops and strategy work together?

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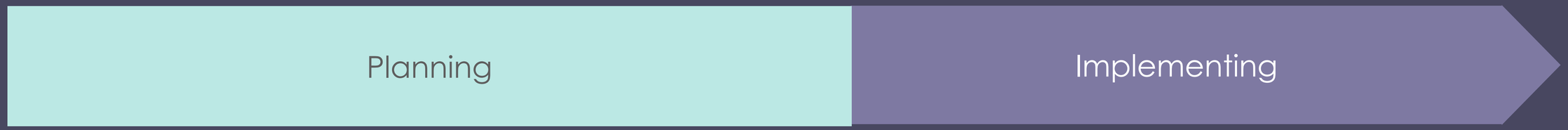
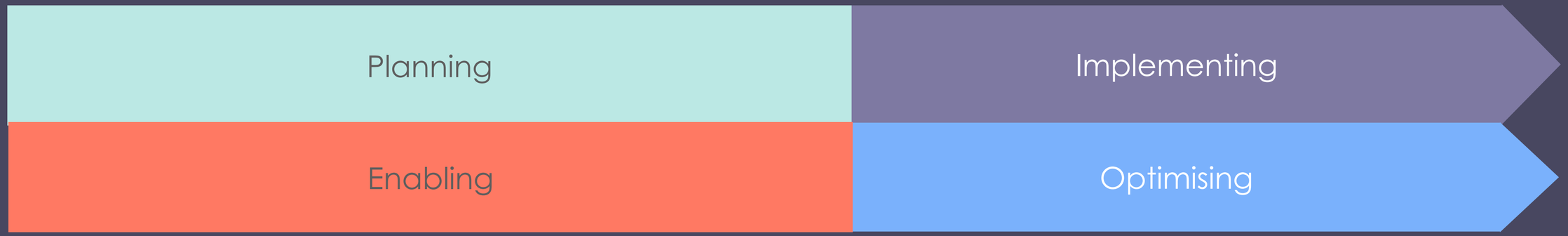

Planning
Implementing


Planning
Implementing
Enabling
Optimising

Focus

Strategist: Understand what brand/business, and users need to achieve

Ops: facilitate workshops, help find efficiencies with other departments

Lay foundations

Strategist: Establish brand voice, formats, frameworks, style guides etc

Ops: Enable guidelines frameworks/design system

Define who does the work

Strategist: Identify who will do the work

Ops: Recruitment, onboarding, identify skill gaps, organise training and coaching

Define process

Strategist: Identify how the work will be done

Ops: Select tools, simplify processes, procure tools and systems

Measure

Strategist: Define how success will be measured

Ops: Create test frameworks, document test outcomes or best practice examples

Maintain

Strategist: Define how the work will be updated and tested

Ops: Help create audits, measure engagement, identify improvement areas

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We don’t always need an ops team or operations person to focus on *how* we deliver the work.

Any of us can start to think more operationally and spend time removing the barriers

Identify your pain points

- What should content designers be doing?
- What are they doing?
- What's the desired outcome vs actual?
- What are the biggest pain points?
- What's being done about it already?
- What category do the issues fall into: people, process, tools and systems, capability or organisational alignment?
- What's being said?

- Team interviews
- Pain points workshops
- Stakeholder interviews
- Surveys
- Time-tracking surveys
- Process mapping
- Tools assessments
- Pre-mortems

Summarise the issues in a way you can share

	Joining a squad	Understand product strategy	Starting design	Producing work	QA	Production to live	Measuring	Sharing success	Developing new skills
Actions What should the content designer be doing?	• Understanding OKRs, roadmap and initiatives • Getting set up on Figma • Intros and ways of working with PDs, PM and research								
Desired outcome What is the required outcome?	Content designer fully up to speed, feels like part of the team and ready to start work								
Current outcome What is the present outcome?	Content designers can't get into Figma, isn't sure about priorities and ways of working aren't established								
Gains What's already being done or improving?	PMs are starting to understand content design Roadmaps are becoming more established								
Quotes What are CDs/PDs/PMs saying?	"I was a bit confused when I joined my squad as to what our priorities were and why"								
Pains What causes problems or frustration?									
Tools/systems									
Processes									
Ways of working									
Capability									
Opportunities **What can we do to improve?**									

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"I was a bit confused when I joined my squad as to what our priorities were and why"

Identify potential opportunities through ideation

It takes ages for CDs to get Figma access

CDs and PDs aren’t sure how they should work together

Some PDs aren’t used to working with CDs

It takes ages for CDs to get Figma access

CDs and PDs aren’t sure how they should work together

Some PDs aren’t used to working with CDs

How might we ensure all CDs have immediate Figma access?

How might we communicate how CDs and PDs should work together?

How might we get more designers used to working with CDs?

How might we ensure all CDs have immediate Figma access?

Make sure all new starters have correct fonts set up so they can edit

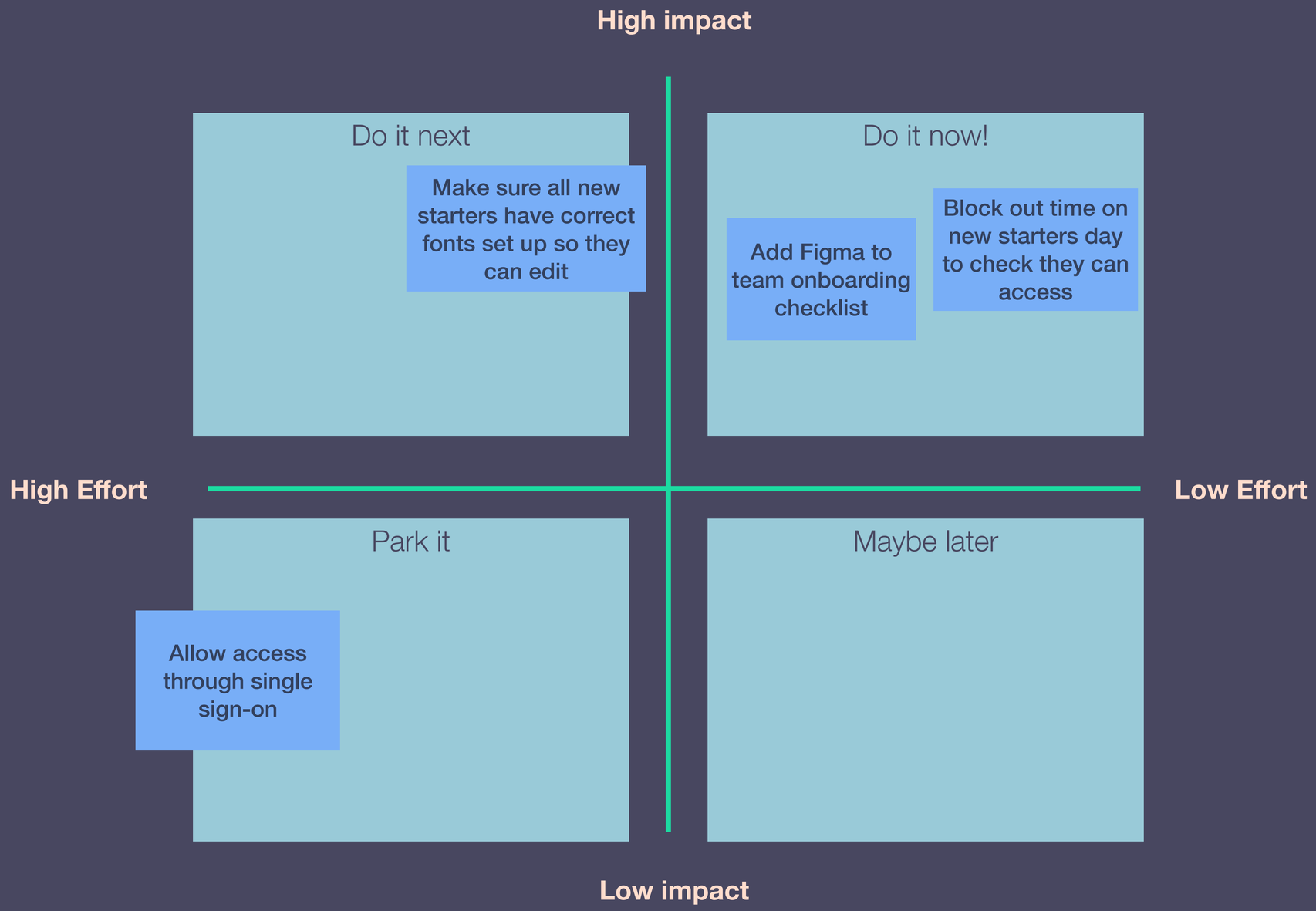
Create ‘front page’ doc for each project to onboard new team members

Block out time on new starters day to check they can access

Allow access through single sign-on

Add Figma to team onboarding checklist

Identify the highest impact solutions


High impact
Do it next
Make sure all new starters have correct fonts set up so they can edit
Do it now!
Add Figma to team onboarding checklist
Block out time on new starters day to check they can access
High Effort
Low Effort
Park it
Allow access through single sign-on
Maybe later
Low impact

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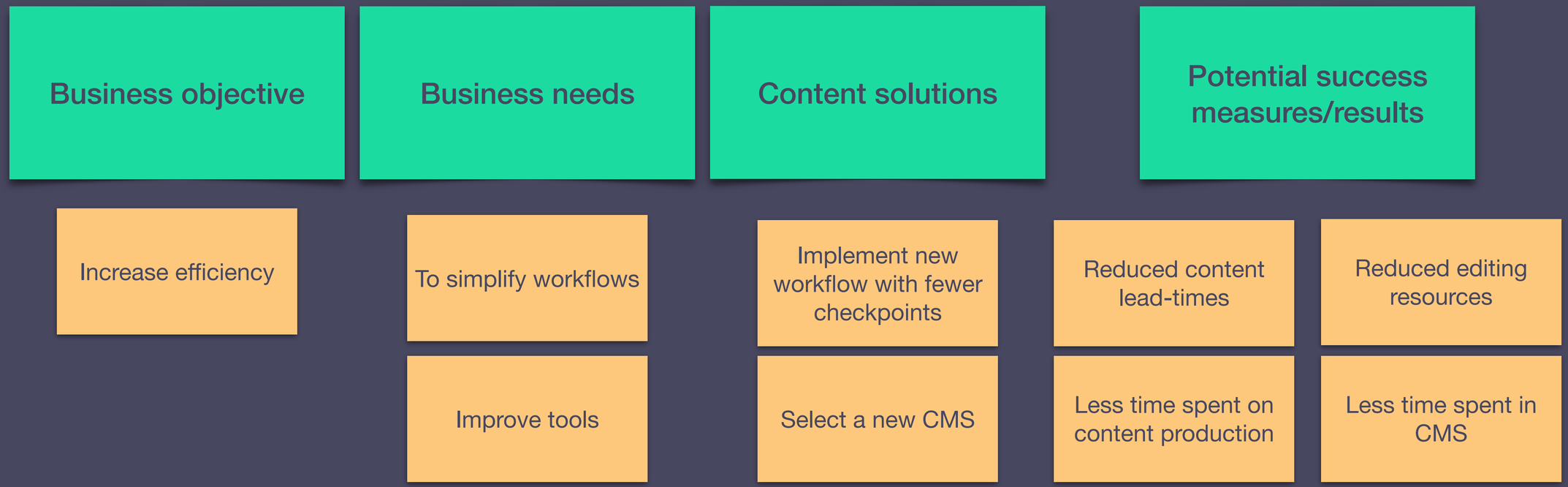
Link your work back to company goals


Business objective
Business needs
Content solutions
Potential success measures/results
Increase efficiency
To simplify workflows
Improve tools
Implement new workflow with fewer checkpoints
Select a new CMS
Reduced content lead-times
Less time spent on content production
Reduced editing resources
Less time spent in CMS

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Define your team’s activity roadmap

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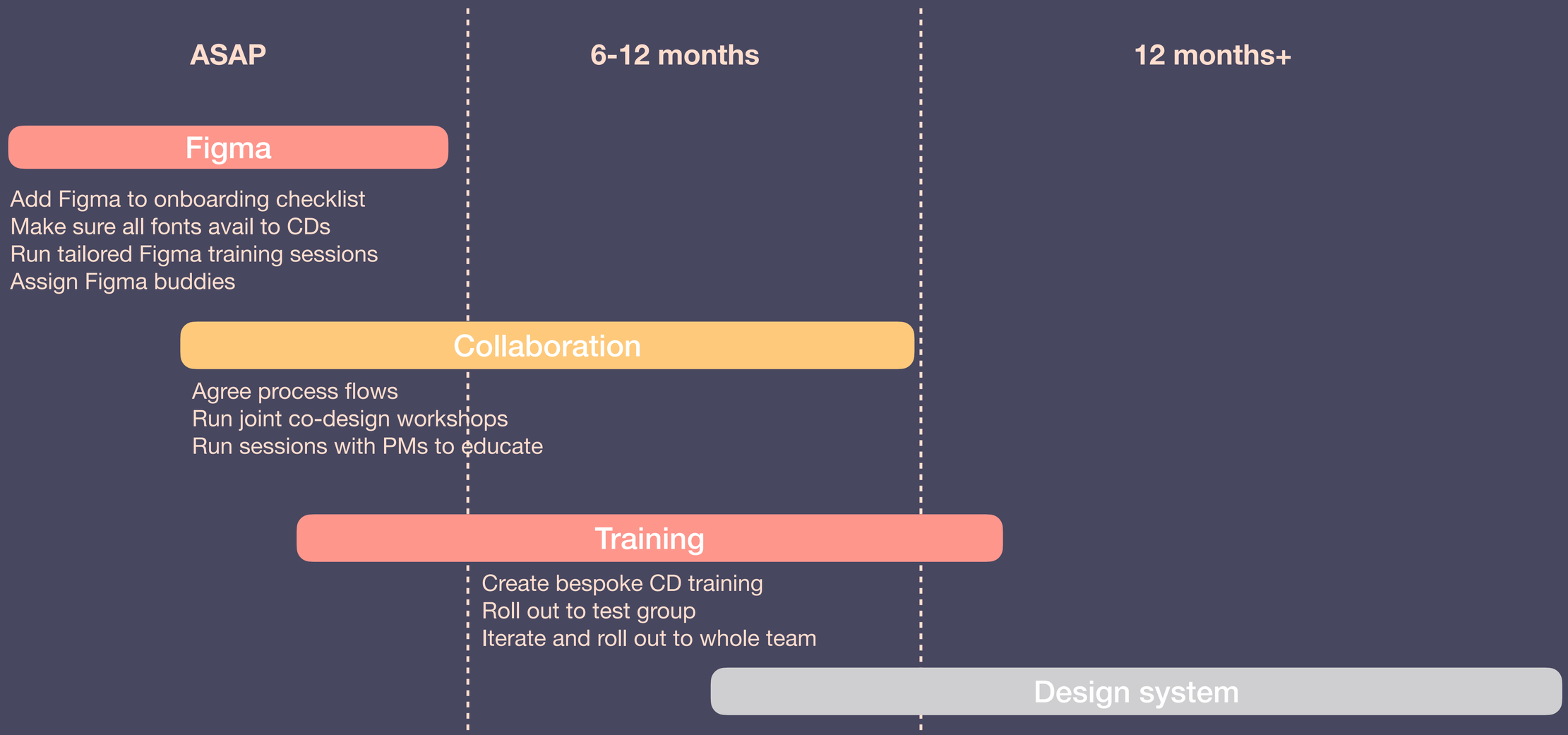
ASAP
6-12 months
12 months+
Figma
Add Figma to onboarding checklist
Make sure all fonts avail to CDs
Run tailored Figma training sessions
Assign Figma buddies
Collaboration
Agree process flows
Run joint co-design workshops
Run sessions with PMs to educate
Training
Create bespoke CD training
Roll out to test group
Iterate and roll out to whole team
Design system

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Make time to get it done!

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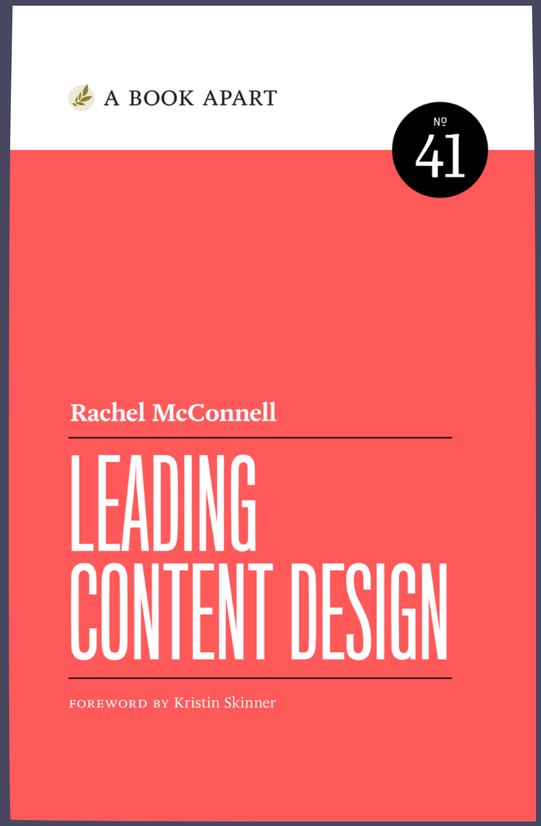
Find out more



tempo

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